

PEOPLE
F O R
PUGET
SOUND

pugetsound.org



The Puget Sound Partnership: yesterday, today and tomorrow

Kathy Fletcher
Exec. Dir., People For Puget Sound
March 19, 2007



Name the Year

“The problems of the Sound--and their solutions--are a complex web of jurisdictions, scientific uncertainty and a multitude of everyday decisions.... This situation is underscored by a lack of coordination and focus on Puget Sound water quality.”



What about this?

- “If the health of the Sound is to be maintained or restored, the above issues...must be addressed as soon as possible.”
- “The Washington State Legislature has recognized the urgency of this matter.”



A Puget Sound Timeline

- 1984 First Puget Sound Water Quality Authority recommends comprehensive plan and coordinated action
- 1985 Legislature turns PSWQA into a real agency
- 1986 First Puget Sound Management Plan adopted



A Puget Sound Timeline

- 1988 Feds name Puget Sound “estuary of national significance”
- 1990 Legislature “reorganizes” PSWQA; removes independence



A Puget Sound Timeline

- 1996 Legislature rearranges the deck chairs again-- PSWQA becomes Puget Sound Action Team
- 2004 Gregoire elected governor, is appalled by Hood Canal dead zone
- 2005 Governor declares 2020 as goal for healthy Sound



A Puget Sound Timeline

- 2005 Governor appoints “Puget Sound Partnership” to advise her on how to save the Sound
- 2006 Partnership reports to Governor, Governor makes recommendations to legislature



A Puget Sound Timeline

- 2007 Legislature considers proposal to create new “Puget Sound Partnership,” calls for “action agenda” by 2008
- 2020 A healthy Puget Sound, or.....?



Sound Issues

1984

- Inadequate sewage treatment
- Contaminated shellfish areas
- Toxic sediments
- Polluted run-off
- Destroyed wetlands

2007

...is our list that much different today?



State of the Sound 2007

“The Sound’s overall trajectory...continues to be one of decline, with continuing harm to the clean water, abundant habitat and intact natural processes that are the foundations of a healthy environment.”

Puget Sound Action Team, 2007



Specific Indicators of Health

- 25 indicators evaluated in 2007 State of the Sound Report (available at www.psat.wa.gov)
- 14 trending negative, 3 trending positive
- 16 in "poor" or "critical" condition
- Both marine and fresh water quality were rated "poor," trending negative



How the Scientists* Define “Healthy”

“A healthy Puget Sound supports sufficient quantity and quality of habitats to provide ecosystem goods and services upon which all species, including humans, depend....”

Three key properties:

- Resilient to changes...
- Built-in redundancy in its parts...
- Representative sample of the diversity of species and habitat types...”

(*Partnership’s Science Working Group)



How the Partnership Defined “Healthy”

A healthy human population is supported by healthy Sound.

Our quality of life is sustained by a healthy Sound.

Puget Sound species and the web of life thrive.

Puget Sound habitat is protected and restored.

Puget Sound rivers and streams provide water for people, fish and wildlife and the environment.

Puget Sound marine and fresh water are clean.



How Governor Gregoire Defines “Healthy”

“Fishable, Swimmable, Diggable”

(2007 State of the State Address)



What has been learned from Chesapeake and other places?

- Government Accountability Office evaluation of Chesapeake, Everglades, Great Lakes programs
- Scathing reviews!



GAO's recommendations

- Decision-making body
- Hold responsible parties accountable
- Link funding to outcomes
- Independent, transparent tracking of results



What's Been Missing in Puget Sound

- Accountability for results
- Sustained effort
- Political will
- Serious money
- Protection and restoration at large scale



Stormwater and the State of the Sound

Stormwater--"high risk" to the health of the Sound

2 indicators:

1. Amount of impervious surface--in "poor" territory, trending negative
2. Development of local government programs --in "neutral" territory, trending positive



Stormwater and Hydrology

- Hydrologic impacts of impervious surfaces and losing forests--water runs off fast rather than catching on trees and seeping into the ground. Leads to:
 - “flashy” streamflows
 - flood damage
 - habitat loss and alteration
 - less groundwater recharge



Stormwater and Water Quality

- Water quality degradation--stormwater transports pollutants from roads, parking lots, lawns and gardens, farms and industrial sites, including:
 - Oil and other petroleum products
 - Heavy metals
 - Fertilizers and pesticides
 - Animal and human waste
 - Sediment from construction sites
 - Other toxins (Pthalates, PCBs, PBDEs, etc.)



Stormwater Solutions

- Tied to population growth, development patterns, transportation
- Need to focus both on retrofit AND on new development
- End of pipe focus vs. prevention strategy



The Partnership and Stormwater

- An “essential priority for action”
- Immediate action: “Phase I and II” municipal stormwater permits under the Clean Water Act (immediately appealed...)
- Coordinated monitoring
- Promote and expand programs to maximize stormwater infiltration
- Pilot projects for a basin approach
- High-profile low impact development projects



Stormwater--an area the Partnership recognized it fell short

- Stormwater experts were highly critical of the Partnership's stormwater recommendations
- The path to 2020 is not laid out in the Partnership report
- The Partnership decided to launch an immediate task force to address stormwater, but that was nixed before the report went to the printer



What's Next

- Another new Puget Sound agency and another planning process, but with a deadline this time (a healthy Sound by 2020)
- Unclear whether the new effort will measure up to GAO's advice--accountability for results the key
- Key funding issues delayed to 2009 legislature
- Can we move from planning and process to actions and results?



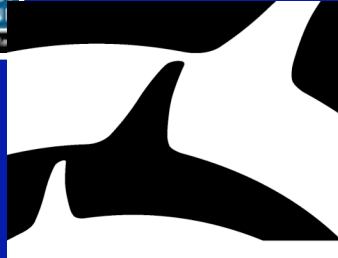
A cautionary tale

- "We have done a truly tremendous job of defining the problem, and we have done a truly tremendous job of defining the solution," said J. Charles Fox, a former head of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. "But we have not yet succeeded in actually implementing the solution."
- "Critics say the program lost valuable time by calling for elaborate plans instead of plunging straight into pollution reductions. And at the end of all this planning, they say, the cleanup had the paralyzing price tag: \$28 billion."

(Washington Post article on the Chesapeake 1/29/07)



Stay tuned!



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Get involved!

People For Puget Sound

www.pugetsound.org

Offices in Mt. Vernon, Seattle, Olympia

Members and volunteers all over!